

**7a REFERRAL FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 13 JULY 2021 – COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW, NHDC FUNDING CRITERIA HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD COMMUNITY USE, AND REVIEW OF CABINET PANELS’ TERMS OF REFERENCE**

*NB: To be taken with Item 9*

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- (1) That the following revision of the Grant Policy criteria as set out under section Two for eligibility of organisation (Appendix A) be reconsidered, with the view that Cabinet does not take forward the amendment to Paragraph F.
- (2) That the wording of the following revision of the Grant Policy criteria as set out under section Two for eligibility of organisation (Appendix A) for approval be reconsidered so that it is made clear that Parish, Town and Community Councils may continue to apply for grant funding and that the definition of ‘Additionality’ be made more clear:  
  
Paragraph A Final Bullet Point - Parish, Town and Community Councils (on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality)
  - That the definition of ‘Additionality’, as detailed in Paragraph G, be included in this bullet point.  
Paragraph G – ‘be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides ‘Additionality’ to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of the organisation’s current activities):
  - That the definition of ‘Additionality’ include clarification as to whether the provision of more of a service already provided would be eligible.
- (3) That Cabinet be requested to take into consideration all the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as listed in the Minutes of its meeting of 15 July 2021, before making its final decision on the revisions to the Grant Policy criteria;
- (4) That the Protocol for the NHDC / Health Protection Board Funding (Appendix B) and be requested to approve the amendments to the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel (Appendix C) be approved, and;
- (5) That the proposed amendments to the Cabinet Panels’ Terms of Reference (Appendices D, E & F) be approved.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the report entitled Community Grants Policy Review, NHDC Funding Criteria Health Protection Board Community Use, and Review of Cabinet Panels’ Terms of Reference prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The Executive Member for Community Engagement introduced the report entitled Community Grants Policy Review, NHDC Funding Criteria Health Protection Board Community Use, and Review of Cabinet Panels’ Terms of Reference, together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Community Grants Criteria 2021
- Appendix B – NHDC-HPB Funding Protocol
- Appendix C – Terms of Reference of Community Grants Panel

- Appendix D – Cabinet Panel on Environment Terms of Reference
- Appendix E – Cabinet Panel Community Terms of Reference
- Appendix F – Cabinet Panel on Place Terms of Reference

She drew attention to the following:

- A review of the grants policy had been a priority since May 2019, with the aim of making it user-friendly and accessible while at the same time rigorous;
- The nature of the way grants were distributed had changed during the pandemic as they became necessary for the survival of organisations as well as for community projects;
- Health Protection Board funding of £100,000 had been provided and a protocol for its distribution was proposed in Appendix B to the report;
- It was proposed that the District Wide Community Facilities Capital and Revenue Grants Panel Terms of Reference be updated to enable it to consider the NHDC/HPB funding applications and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community Engagement;
- Amendments to the Grants Policy were being proposed to ensure that the demonstration of financial need was as rigorous as possible without being unfriendly or inaccessible, and to ensure that organisations were looking at a range of different funding sources in addition to NHDC.

The Service Director – Legal and Community drew attention to the following:

- Changes to the Terms of Reference of the Cabinet Panels were proposed to reflect the new portfolios and simplify the titles to ‘Environment’, ‘Community’ and ‘Place’;

The following Members asked questions and took part in debate:

- Councillor Carol Stanier;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Lisa Nash;
- Councillor Claire Strong.

Comments raised by Members included:

- NHDC had reviewed the grants policy initially to make it easier and clearer to apply for money via the grants system, but the proposed changes seemed to represent a significant tightening of the criteria;
- The wording of the proposed revision at Paragraph F should be re-considered as it appeared to exclude parish and town councils who could raise their precept;
- The comment at 8.2 which stated: ‘Some organisations are able to raise funds through precepts, levies or other fund-raising activities’, should be removed as it seemed to exclude parish and town councils;
- Cabinet could also be requested to consider removing the condition in the Community Grants Policy (2.1 A) - List of organisations eligible to apply for grants - referring to Parish, Town and Community Councils which stated ‘on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality’, as this could be interpreted as limiting applications from parish and town councils.

The Executive Member for Community Engagement responded to comments and questions as follows:

- During the pandemic, some organisations had been doing similar work, and so the additional benefit criteria was included to ensure grant applications were considered

alongside existing provision by other organisations doing similar work, for example food provision;

- Discussions on how grant applications met the criteria would continue to take place between the Community Engagement Team, Members and the Area Committees;
- There was no intention to exclude parish councils.

The Policy and Community Engagement Manager drew attention to the following:

- The revisions were being proposed to make the most of the funding to stretch it further and make a real difference to those communities that had the greatest need;
- The revisions would enable a rigorous assessment of applications before taking them to Area Committees or District Panels but were not intended to be a barrier to accessing funding.

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Paragraph A Final Bullet Point - Parish, Town and Community Councils (on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality)

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Paragraph G – 'be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides 'Additionality' to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of the organisation's current activities):

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*NB: The report considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2021 can be viewed at agenda item 12 here:*

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=2678&Ver=4>